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Deportations and Counterinsurgency

A Comparison of Malaya, Algeria and Romania

ANDREI MIROIU

Like Molière's bourgeois, who wrote prose without knowing it, the American armed forces fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan between the invasion of the respective countries in 2001-2003 and roughly 2006 practiced counterinsurgency (COIN) without knowing it or, more accurately, without admitting it¹. Ever since the end of the Vietnam War, COIN had been perceived as having very little to do with the "American Way in Warfare", which concerned mostly large-scale conflicts fought for vital objectives and mobilizing vast numbers of soldiers supported by tremendous material resources². Very few officers had any formal theoretical or practical training in fighting armed rebels, and the political leadership in the Department of Defense had even forbidden the use of the word "insurgency" in the initial post-occupation stages in Iraq. The situation changed after 2005-2006, when the U.S. elite decided to put its trust in a particular group of military officers and academics who advocated the doctrine of counterinsurgency (COIN) as the best solution to the twin nightmares of Afghanistan and Iraq³. Led by General David Petraeus, the group rewrote the American tactical and strategic guidelines for conflicts in occupied countries and then, under his direct command, applied this strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan⁴. This particular school elevated the experiences of late colonial warfare, notably the French experience in Algeria and the British

¹ I would like to thank Dr Andrew Tan, Dr David Lee, Dr William Clapton and an anonymous reviewer of *Studia Politica* for their help in revising this article. Fragments of this article were presented at the 32nd Annual Conference of the Australian Historical Association in Wollongong, the World History Association Conference "Empire, Faith and Conflict" in Fremantle and the "Past, Present, Future: Shifting Boundaries", UNSW Postgraduate Conference in Sydney. I am thankful to the other panelists and participants for their helpful comments and criticism.

² Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War. A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, Macmillan, New York, 1973.

³ Counterinsurgency stands for the ensemble of political and military measures a central government takes against armed rebel groups challenging its policies or rule. Andrew T.H. Tan, *U.S. Strategy against Global Terrorism. How It Evolved, Why It Failed, and Where It is Headed*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009; Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn. America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency*, The New Press, New York, 2013.

⁴ This process is carefully detailed in Fred M. Kaplan, *The Insurgents. David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2013.

campaign in Malaya to the status of policy guides for the early 21st century world⁵.

This article attempts two things: to briefly recall the argument that in order to understand the contemporary COIN approach we must go back to its actual and professed intellectual and practical roots, the study of the classical counterinsurgencies fought immediately after the Second World War both by Western and Eastern states; and to highlight the centrality of internal deportations for military victory against the rebels by discussing this approach in Malaya, Algeria and Romania. This centrality makes it very hard for contemporary democratic states to pursue successful COIN, as doing so would place their governments in a moral breach with their own standards and values and in a tenuous position concerning internal and international law.

The significance for the theory and practice of contemporary COIN of the campaigns fought after the Second World War needs hardly be demonstrated. Critically or not, all major COIN authors and practitioners ground their works and conclusions on the supposedly “golden era of COIN”⁶. David Kilcullen, one of the academic and military brains behind the anti-insurgent approach in Afghanistan and Iraq consciously posits his theory of a comprehensive approach to a globalized insurgency as both a continuation and sharp correction of the lessons learned from the theorists of the 1960⁷, especially British expert Robert Thompson⁷. To advance a relatively similar position another foremost analyst of the phenomenon, John Mackinlay frames his approach of the contemporary global insurgency as a post-Maoist phase, thus basing his theory on the presumed importance of Mao Zedong’s influence on the classical, Cold War armed rebellions⁸. Probably more importantly from a practical perspective, the 2006 US Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual, co-authored by General David Petraeus, the top COIN officer in Iraq and then Afghanistan, contains historical sections with lessons learned from previous conflicts in Malaya, Algeria or Vietnam, as well as a quite significant bibliography of the works on which the entire approach is based⁹.

⁵ Beatrice Heuser, “The Cultural Revolution in Counterinsurgency”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2007, pp. 153-171.

⁶ See for the term encompassing the period from 1948 to 1973 James D. Kiras, “Irregular Warfare”, in David Jordan, James D. Kiras, David J. Lonsdale, Ian Speller, Christopher Tuck, C. Dale Walton, *Understanding Modern Warfare*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, p. 260. The two years obviously refer to the beginning of the Malayan Emergency and the end of American military involvement in the war in Vietnam.

⁷ The quintessence of his approach can be found in David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, pp. 166-167.

⁸ The larger argument is in John Mackinlay, *The Insurgent Archipelago. From Mao to bin Laden*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009.

⁹ US Army, *Counterinsurgency FM 3-24*, December 2006.

Present-day theorists and practitioners see the classical counterinsurgencies of the early post-1945 period in a particular light. The “hearts and minds” approach, which forms the consensus in contemporary Western COIN and stands for a strategy that centres on winning the active and willing support of the civilian population in the struggle against armed rebels, is essentially the conventional wisdom about what happened in Malaya in the 1950’s¹⁰. Similarly, the widely held modern belief that the use of purely military means to destroy an armed rebellion is wrong is based on a set of analyses of the French experience in Algeria from 1954 to 1962¹¹. Again, the conviction that there is very little use in studying non-Western strategies of COIN because of their alleged over-reliance on violence and lack of a politically-driven approach to quelling the rebellion also stems from the literature of the 1960’s. For instance, according to some authors, the Soviet Union’s “non-Western” culture, history and geography is responsible for its approach to COIN being substantially different from those of the London, Paris or Washington¹².

This article will showcase that internal deportation, an approach that can hardly be conceived in the “hearts and minds” framework, was crucial in both Malaya and Algeria. Amongst the many civilian approaches and military tactics including propaganda, political promises, intelligence gathering, the formation of informant networks, direct strikes, ambushes, cordons, patrols and combined-arms operations, internal deportation stands as a preeminent tool for the authorities which despite its moral, legal, economic and social implications was chosen for its efficacy in quelling armed rebellion. This will highlight the hypocrisy of current military guidelines concerning COIN, such as the American FM 3-24 (2006) a document that failed to engage with the harrowing reality and magnitude of deportations despite being based to a large degree on the works of David Galula, a

¹⁰ The classic on the subject is Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare. The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989. For the consensus see Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy. Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 436-437. For a strong, polemic attack on the current and historical theory and practice of COIN see Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013.

¹¹ For a typical example of these analyses, usually written with very little or no use of French sources see John Pimlott, “The French Army: from Indochina to Chad, 1946-1984”, in Ian F.W. Beckett, John Pimlott (eds.), *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, Croom Helm, London, 1985, pp. 47-66.

¹² See for this and the persistence of this attitude Rod Paschall, “Soviet Counterinsurgency: Past, Present and Future” in Richard H. Shultz (ed.), *Guerrilla Warfare and Counterinsurgency. U.S. – Soviet Policy in the Third World*, Lexington Books, Lexington, 1989.

French theorist and an officer in Algeria¹³. Furthermore, by including the Romanian case, the article shows that there was positively little difference in how internal deportation was pursued by democratic and authoritarian governments, throwing doubt that cultural markers are important in understanding post-war repression of armed rebels.

Malaya

Between 1948 and 1960 the Malayan Peninsula was swept by a bitter struggle pitting the colonial power, the United Kingdom and its local allies against the political and military organizations of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). While to some extent this conflict was fought on ideological lines, the ethnic dimension should be mentioned at the beginning of the analysis, as the MCP was overwhelmingly recruited from amongst the large Chinese minority of Malaya. It thus allowed the British to gather the support of both the rich Chinese and majority Malays and to present their internal repression of a pro-independence movement in the light of the broader East-West Cold War, thus gaining support at home and in other Western nations¹⁴.

From a military perspective Malaya featured a vast array of operations and approaches. Conventional manoeuvres by company-sized units against Communist “regiments” took place in the early stages of the conflict; for many years the Royal Air Force bombed the jungles; ambushes, patrols, sweeps through the jungle and the cordoning of big population centres were all attempted. A vast intelligence network operated against Communist supporters and informers in the big cities and the rural communities and was combined with a psychological warfare campaign that featured the distribution of leaflets, radio broadcasts, and low-flying aircraft with megaphones and re-education camps for captured rebels. British Special Forces hunted down the Communist insurgents deep into the jungle, forming local alliances with the Malayan aborigines dwelling in the forests. Most importantly, population control was exercised on an extremely large scale. Over half a million Chinese peasants were deported from the jungle fringes into Malayan-policed and

¹³ Lalaeh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows. Confinement in Counterinsurgencies*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2013, p. 183.

¹⁴ See Anthony Short, “The Malayan Emergency”, in Ronald Haycock (ed.), *Regular Armies and Insurgency*, Croom Helm, London, 1979, pp. 65-66; Charles Townshend, *Britain's Civil Wars. Counterinsurgency in the Twentieth Century*, Faber and Faber, London, 1986; Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-1960*, Macmillan, London, 1990.

administered secure villages surrounded by barbed wire. Food was rationalized and controlled; identification cards were issued and were mandatory. *Habeas corpus* was suspended and judges were forced to issue death sentences for everyone caught carrying an illegal weapon; whole villages were sometimes arrested and collective fines were imposed. This goes a good measure against the “hearts-and-minds” approach, but somehow that particularly narrative still dominates the academic discourse concerning the Malayan Emergency¹⁵.

The most notorious aspect of the population control policies in Malaya was the vast program of internal deportation, called in official documents and subsequent academic literature “resettlement”. The British colonial government realized soon after initial military operations failed to destroy the insurgents that one of its most important strategies needs to be the separation of the rebels from their sources of support. As the MCP was 90% Chinese and drew its strength from the poor elements of this ethnic group of the peninsula, the authorities resolved to target the group in order to destroy the Min Yuen (People’s Movement), the communist logistical and intelligence network operating inside the Chinese community¹⁶.

Internal deportation was identified early on as the best way to deal with the rebel’s support network¹⁷. Indeed, programs of moving the rural ethnic Chinese in

¹⁵ Good sources on the military aspects of the Malayan conflict are James E. Dougherty, “The Guerrilla War in Malaya”, in Franklin Mark Osanka (ed.), *Modern Guerrilla Warfare. Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941-1961*, The Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1964, pp. 300-306; Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning*, Faber and Faber, London, 1967; Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare...cit.*; John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, Praeger, Westport, Conn., 2002; David Ucko, “Countering Insurgents through Distributed Operations: Insights from Malaya 1948-1960”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2007, pp. 47-72; Karl Hack, “The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2009, pp. 383-414.

¹⁶ While this was realised fairly early, the crystallization of the policy was in the proposals issued by Lieutenant-General Harold Briggs in the spring of 1950. The outline of his strategy called for: dominating the populated area, securing them and use them as information sources; breaking up the Min Yuen in the populated areas; therefore to isolate the bandits from the food and information supply organization; destroying the bandits by forcing them to attack the security forces in the secured territory, see “The Briggs Plan” CAB 21/1681 MAL C(50)23, Appendix, 24 May 1950 in A.J. Stockwell (ed.), *A.J. Stockwell (ed.), Malaya, Part II, The Communist Insurrection 1948-1953*, HMSO, London, 1995, p. 217.

¹⁷ Telegram from Henry Gurney to Creech Jones CO717/167/52849/2/1948, ff. 108-110, 25 October 1948 in A.J. Stockwell (ed.), *Malaya, Part II, cit.*, pp. 77-79.

government-controlled communities started in 1949 under the High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney¹⁸, but were brought to their full intensity under High Commissioner and Director of Operations General Sir Gerald Templer, who ruled Malaya with proconsul powers from 1952 to 1954¹⁹. It was during this latter period when the program was fully completed and the results became apparent. Overall, it involved the destruction of the squatters' way of life, as all of them – half a million people – were forced to move from their villages (*kampongs*) in the jungle's fringes to a number of "New Villages" in areas closer to the coast and to the main plantations and tin mines. In addition to that, another half a million Chinese already working on the plantations and tin mines were regrouped from their initial lodgings to government controlled and policed settlements²⁰.

The process of deportation itself was painful enough. Government troops usually arrived in a village and gave its inhabitants a few hours to gather their belongings after which they were herded in trucks and moved to their new places of residence. The troops then burned the village and destroyed the crops. To assuage their feelings, their superiors insured European soldiers and officers that the squatters were just nomads and the *kampongs* just temporary shelters²¹. Obviously, the Chinese peasants were not able to collect all of their belongings and they were seldom compensated for their losses²².

The reality of "New Villages" has been portrayed by their proponents as clean, organized and safe communities offering their inhabitants security from attacks, good roads, schools and medical assistance²³. Obviously this is true in a

¹⁸ Cabinet memorandum by Creech Jones CAB 129/33/1, CP (49) 52, 5 March 1949 in A.J. Stockwell (ed.), *Malaya*, Part II, cit., p. 118.

¹⁹ However, by the time Templer became supremo in Malaya, these measures had already affected MCP strategy to a very large degree, Karl Hack, "Everyone Lived in Fear: Malaya and the British Way of Counter-insurgency", *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 23, no. 4-5, 2012, pp. 671-699.

²⁰ Numbers of the deported reached 423.000 for the Chinese squatters relocated in 410 new villages and – 116 about 650.000 mine and estate workers settled in wired-in villages. They accounted for about half of the entire Chinese community in Malaya, David French, *Army, Empire, and Cold War. The British Army and Military Policy, 1945-1971*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, p. 115.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² As one of the classic analysts of the Emergency said: "Putting the squatter inside a fence, and quickly, was all that seemed to matter", Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare...cit.*, p. 103.

²³ Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency, Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1966, p. 121; James E. Dougherty, "The Guerrilla War in Malaya", cit., p. 303. As late as 2010 some could write: "The Chinese villages were not constructed as concentration or labour camps, but as politically engaged and

certain technical regard, though in the initial phases of the resettlement program those who lived in the new communities found very little in terms of hygiene and education, at least until the government got organized and financed this program accordingly. The Chinese families were indeed allotted a small plot to build a hut and grow some crops and a sum to support them for their first five months²⁴. They were also promised titles of property to the lands they were going to cultivate²⁵. But from the perspective of the former squatters the reality of their new homes must have been strikingly different. Undergoing the trauma of having been moved from their homes, they found themselves in new, unknown surroundings, confined in what were effectively camps surrounded by barbed wire, some with night perimeter lighting. Obviously, night moves were prohibited. Moreover, the villages were for many years guarded by police units raised almost entirely from the ethnic Malays, who were not necessarily displaying a very endearing attitude towards the Chinese²⁶. It took a long time until the effect of government propaganda was positive and the authorities were able to replace the Malay policemen with Chinese Home Guards insuring the security of the New Villages²⁷.

Understanding that a main priority for destroying Min Yuen was the classification of all possible supporters, the government started issuing identification cards to all of the inhabitants of the new settlements, thus tracking their moves and connections. The identity cards comprised personal details, a photograph and fingerprint. By identity controls when leaving or entering the village and random controls on the roads, any suspect individual or move could be thus detected and brought to the attention of intelligence agencies²⁸. The MCP understood this soon enough and it strove to destroy the identification cards of anyone they encountered, thus mostly insuring that the civilians went through a harrowing bureaucratic process of having to renew their cards.

Possibly the most efficient COIN policy which was permitted by the resettlement program was strict food control and rationing. The Malayan soil cannot

progressive communities", David H. Ucko, "The Malayan Emergency: The Legacy and Relevance of a Counter-Insurgency Success Story", *Defence Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1-2, 2010, p. 26.

²⁴ Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning*, cit., p. 59.

²⁵ Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-1960*, cit., p. 116.

²⁶ Richard Clutterbuck, *Guerrillas and Terrorists*, Faber and Faber, London, 1977, p. 39; *Idem*, *The Long Long War. Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1966, p. 40.

²⁷ John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency, From Palestine to Northern Ireland*, Palgrave, Houndmills, 2002, p. 41.

²⁸ Richard Clutterbuck, *The Long Long War...cit.*, p. 38.

easily support vast numbers of people and the jungle itself, where guerrillas were forced to operate soon after the beginning of the crisis, is even less able to provide food to large numbers of people dwelling in it, especially if they are not accustomed to a hunters-gatherers lifestyle. By destroying the squatter settlements the British cut the lifeline those could give to the communist guerrillas²⁹. To insure that food would not even trickle from the New Villages, strict food controls were implemented at the entrance of the settlements. The Chinese workers, who were marched daily to their new working places, be they rubber plantations, tin mines or agricultural plots, were subjected to systematic searches and controls for food. Workers were prevented for having any food for lunch; when food was issued to the inhabitants of the villages, it usually consisted of fried rice – which in the humid climate became uneatable within two days³⁰.

One should add that it was not only the Chinese who were subjected to the resettlement policies. In the early phases of the conflict, until it was realized that they can be turned to the government's side with better effect if left in the jungles, substantial numbers of Malayan aborigines were also moved to New Villages. Unaccustomed to a sedentary lifestyle and confinement to enclosed, insalubrious places, the death toll among them was larger than in the ranks of the squatters³¹.

Resettlement was not, obviously, an easy walk in the park for the military authorities. There were serious instances when the former squatters refused to comply with the government guidance in the new communities, either by continuing their support to the insurgents, either by refusing to cooperate with the police and intelligence agencies in providing information about the rebels. In some cases, the reaction of the authorities involved collective punishments over whole villages. General Gerald Templer, who otherwise coined the benign "hearts and minds" slogan for his policies, personally carried out such punishments in Tanjong Malim and other recalcitrant communities³². Put under arrest and an early curfew, the inhabitants and their elders were publicly scolded, fined and had their food rations reduced³³. More often than not, collective punishments eventually produced

²⁹ Peter Lowe, *Contending with Nationalism and Communism. British Policy towards Southeast Asia, 1945-65*, Palgrave, Houndmills, 2009, p. 46.

³⁰ The extremely detailed regulations concerning the conduct of searches can be found in Director of Operations, Malaya, *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, 3rd edition, 1958.

³¹ John D. Leary, *Violence and the Dream People. The Orang Asli in the Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, Ohio University Center for International Studies, Athens, 1995.

³² Charles Townshend, *Britain's Civil Wars...cit.*, p. 160.

³³ On collective punishment in Tanjong Malim, Pekan Jabi and Permatang Tinggi see the letter from Oliver Lyttleton to Grimond CO1022/56 no 35, 10 December 1952 in A.J.

compliance, although there were voices that doubted their efficiency³⁴. In a few cases the reaction could be far more brutal. The most notorious incident was at the New Village of Batang Kali, where troops of the 2nd Scots Guards shot and killed under the pretence of an attempted escape 20 unarmed but recalcitrant Chinese villagers, with the whole incident deemed legal by the Attorney General of Malaya³⁵.

Algeria

The war in Algeria (1954-1962) ended with the military victory of the French colonial power but its nearly complete defeat at the negotiations table³⁶. Despite that, Algeria remains a very interesting example of colonial warfare, whose roots go all the way back to the war of conquest and particularly to the 1840s, when General than Marshal Thomas Bugeaud pioneered a series of counter-insurrectionary tactics relevant to this day. For a century after Bugeaud, the officers who were responsible for the conquest of West Africa cut their teeth in Algeria, as did many of the important general who led armies in the major wars of the 20th century³⁷. Socially, the main impact of the French was the introduction of the European system of private property and the vast transfer of lands to the colonists. The colonists came mainly from the impoverished regions in south-central France, but there were many Spaniards, Italians, Corsicans and Maltese as well³⁸.

The movement that came to embody the reaction of the Arab Algerians was a lay movement, who incorporated and subordinated the Islamic nationalists and the local Communists, to the surprise and dismay of some Frenchmen who wished to see everything through the prism of the West-East confrontation. The Algerian

Stockwell (ed.), *Malaya*, Part II, cit., pp. 424-425.

³⁴ For instance, Victor Purcell, *Malaysia*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1965, pp. 112-113.

³⁵ David French, *Army, Empire, and Cold War...*cit., p. 123; Gregory Blaxland, *The Regiments Depart. A History of the British Army, 1945-1970*, William Kimber, London, 1971, p. 87 gives 26 dead.

³⁶ James S. Corum, *Bad Strategies. How Major Powers Fail in Counterinsurgency*, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2008, pp. 77-78.

³⁷ A.S. Kanya-Forstner, "The French Marines and the Conquest of the Western Sudan, 1880-1899", in J.A. De Moor, H.L. Wesseling (eds.), *Imperialism and War. Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa*, Brill, Leiden, 1989, p. 120; Glenn E. Torrey, *Henri Mathias Berthelot: General of France, Founder of Modern Romania*, Center for Romanian Studies, Iași, 2000.

³⁸ Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants Wars of the Twentieth Century*, Faber and Faber, London, 1971.

Front for National Liberation (FLN), boasting amongst its numbers former soldiers in the French army with counter-guerrilla experience in Indochina launched a campaign of bombings and assassinations on 1 November 1954. Soon, the action was concentrated in the agricultural hinterland of Algeria's main cities, where the insurgents killed some European settlers and a far higher number of Arab loyalists. The rebels obtained weapons and other type of support from the Nationalist leader of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser. The authorities reacted swiftly enough, aided by the fact that unlike in Indochina, here they could use conscripted soldiers, as Algeria was part of metropolitan France. Paris amassed within a year and a half over 190.000 troops against an estimated 20.000 rebels and through a system of raids, local terror, cordoning, clear-and-hold approaches effectively broke the back of the rural insurgency by 1956.

When the FLN moved the fight to the streets of the big cities (Oran, Algiers, Constantine) through a ferocious bombing campaign against European civilians, the French authorities reacted by sending in crack troops, establishing a thorough intelligence system penetrating the rebels' organizational and support network. Widespread torture was a mainstay of the system and along with the condoning of a vast anti-Arab campaign waged by local militias run by the European settlers was one of the causes for the eventual breakdown of political and social support for the Algerian campaign. But within months the urban insurgency was defeated, forcing the insurgents to move to the countryside and from there to the mountains. Continually harassed by raids of French Special Forces making good use of helicopters and increased firepower and isolated from possible help or sanctuaries in Morocco and Tunisia through a system of patrolled and electrified land barriers, the FLN was no serious military threat to the government. An economic program to develop the country made huge progress in the final years of the conflict. Rather than the actions of the rebels, the collapse of metropolitan French will to hold on to Algeria was the prime factor of the eventual proclamation of independence in 1962³⁹.

While this is the traditional narrative concerning the Algerian War, population control approaches are central for understanding the outcome of the conflict. As in many previous and contemporary civil wars, the government

³⁹ The fragment on the course of the Algerian War is based on François Sully, *The Age of the Guerrilla. The New Warfare*, Parent's Magazine Press, New York, 1968; Robert Faber, *The War of the Flea*, Paladin, Bungay, 1970; John Pimlott, "The French Army: from Indochina to Chad, 1946-1984", cit.; Andre Nouschi, *L'Algérie amère 1914-1994*, Editions de la maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris, 1995; David Jordan, "Countering Insurgency from the Air: The Postwar Lessons", *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 28, no.1, April 2007, pp. 96-111.

concluded that it would be beneficial to remove a large part of the Algerian Muslim population from small, distant villages where they could easily fall under the influence of the FLN into larger localities, closer to strategic points and army bases. It is estimated that a total of two and a half of the seven million Algerian Muslims that lived in the country in the late 1950s went through internal deportations, sometimes forcefully removed by French troops, who destroyed their homes and their cultivated lands⁴⁰.

The first camps were organized in the Aurès, a mountainous region in the East of the country as early as 1955, but their existence only became known to the wider public through the report of Michel Rocard, leaked to the press in March 1959⁴¹. 40.000 people were displaced in 1955. By summer 1957 there were already a million people in the camps. The *Sections Administratives Spécialisées*, the military-political units tasked with gaining the trust of the population and presented as the spearhead of a “hearts and minds” approach were also heavily involved in the whole process. By early 1959 there were over 936 centres in operation⁴². Altogether, the number of those deported or detained in their own villages amounted to a staggering 40% of the Algerian population. The most exact available figure for the number of those deported can be given for 1 April 1961, when 2.932 centres held 1.958.302 people⁴³.

The strategy was widely welcomed by the officers of the “revolutionary warfare school”, who saw in it a possibility of applying their theory about cutting the link between the guerrillas and the population. Although some of the camps were presented by propaganda as model villages, many were surrounded by barbed wire, were heavily guarded and movement was supervised⁴⁴. Among the 2.5 million Algerians placed in the camps the most affected were the 400.000 nomads, whose way of life was completely altered. They were specifically targeted in order to cut the guerrillas from a source of food and information. To force them in the camps, sometimes their herds were machine-gunned from French military aircraft⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Douglas Porch, *La légion étrangère 1831-1962*, Fayard, Paris, 2004, p. 661.

⁴¹ The report became fully available only in 2003, but the fragments published in 1959 contributed both to a change of policy concerning the camps and to the shifting in the public mood concerning the war, Tassadit Yacine, “Révélation sur les ‘camps’ de la guerre d’Algérie”, *Le Monde diplomatique*, Actualités, Février 2004, p. 29.

⁴² Michel Rocard, *Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d’Algérie*, Mille et une nuits, Paris, 2003, pp. 103-153.

⁴³ One good source on the camps is Michel Cornaton, *Les camps de regroupement de la guerre d’Algérie*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 1998 (1967).

⁴⁴ Anne Guérin-Castell, “Un déshonneur de la République”, <http://www.ldh-toulon.net/spip.php?article692>, last consulted 13 June 2013.

⁴⁵ Simon Chavarie, “Quadriller, regrouper, contrôler, sédentariser”, <http://www.lepanoptique>

At most, the deported had a few days or hours to pick up their goods and leave. Most frequently, however, army trucks would simply arrive at a village, surround it and immediately transport everyone to their new lodgings⁴⁶. Even more strikingly, the soldiers compelled the Algerian Muslims to sign documents in French saying that they voluntarily agree to the destruction of their own homes as a contribution to the war and that they would seek no material compensation⁴⁷. The new settlements, sometimes simple ghettos in already existing large urban concentrations, were controlled through the use of military troops, but more useful than these were the networks of agents of influence and informers that French intelligence established in their midst⁴⁸. The camps were devised to crush all idea of private life and in fact they were a tool of total control over the bodies and minds of the interned⁴⁹. This process of internal deportation, like similar events in history, led to much untold suffering, both through the loss of the old way of life and former homes and through the often insalubrious new surroundings, devoid of proper sanitation and public services⁵⁰. Disease and depression took countless lives and the material and psychological damage could never be fully estimated. In addition to internal deportation, French officers also introduced numbers for the houses and cards for each dwelling containing the number and description of the inhabitants and other information in order to improve population control⁵¹.

.com/sections/histoire/quadriller-regrouper-controler-sedentariser/, last consulted 13 June 2013.

⁴⁶ Michel Cornaton, "Les camps de regroupement de la guerre d'Algérie", colloque *Pour une histoire critique et citoyenne. Le cas de l'histoire franco-algérienne*, 20-22 juin 2006, Lyon, ENS LSH, 2007, http://ens-web3.ens-lsh.fr/colloques/francealgerie/communication.php3?id_article=259 last consulted 13 June 2013

⁴⁷ Keith Sutton, "Army Administration Tensions over Algeria's Centres de Regroupement, 1954-1962", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2, Nov., 1999, pp. 248-249.

⁴⁸ Jacques Fremeaux, "The French Experience in Algeria: Doctrine, Violence and Lessons Learnt", *Civil Wars*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2012, p. 57.

⁴⁹ Especially the new houses were inadequate for the preservation of the intimacy boundaries of traditional Muslim communities, Michel Cornaton, *Les camps de regroupement...*cit., pp. 80-91.

⁵⁰ Even French military sources are critical of these camps, Centre de Doctrine d'Emploi des Forces, "Les Sections Administratives Spécialisées en Algérie: Un outil pour la stabilisation", *Cahier de la recherche doctrinale*, 2005, p. 50.

⁵¹ Alf Andrew Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1972, p. 183.

Romania

An armed movement against the pro-Moscow authorities in the Romanian capital of Bucharest began virtually as soon as the country switched sides on 23 august 1944, moving from an alliance with Nazi Germany to one with the Soviet Union and its allies. The government fought them for over a decade and a half, until the last armed opponents surrendered, were killed or captured in the early 1960s. While this was a very low-intensity conflict and the insurgent groups were never truly able to challenge the pro-Soviet power structures, we can talk in the Romanian case of an insurgency in the sense of a politically motivated, armed struggle against a central government. Indeed, when compared with the Malayan and Algerian case, the Romanian insurgency can be even more relevant for contemporary concerns, being a scattered, diffuse and leaderless movement united nevertheless by an ideology (nationalism) and by the belief that armed struggle would contribute to the downfall of an illegitimate regime supported by a foreign power. We cannot talk of any specific political program that was shared by the insurgents as there was none (unlike the pro-independence political manifestoes of the MCP and the FLN), but the documents consulted as well as secondary literature points out to the nationalism of the insurgents as well as their universal desire to see an end of the regime of the Romanian communists. In this it resembles what Mark Sageman called the “leaderless jihad” to describe the early 2000s evolutions in the Middle East⁵².

In the growing literature of armed anti-communist resistance in Romania a relative consensus has emerged in what regards the outlook and ultimate fate of the guerrillas. According to most authors, they were mostly small groups of up to 20 armed individuals, generally living in remote rural areas, preferably with mountainous terrain. They relied to a great measure on the networks of family and friends in these villages, providing them with shelter, food, information, physical and moral comfort⁵³. They were formed mostly of local anti-communist peasants, led by charismatic figures recruited from former notabilities, notaries, teachers and army officers. A good number of them were city-folk who took to the mountains to add their efforts to the armed resistance and one could find among them students, lawyers and traders. Politically, many had not been affiliated before or during the war, while others had been liberals, members of the National Peasants Party, social

⁵² Marc Sageman, “Leaderless Jihad: Radicalization in the West”, on www.newamerica.net last consulted on 17 June 2013.

⁵³ Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Communist Dictatorship in Romania, *Final Report*, Bucharest, 2006, p. 332.

democrats, and even some were former communists⁵⁴. Many of them, though not the majority, were legionaries, sympathisers of the Romanian fascist movement⁵⁵.

Armed with light weapons, mostly pistols, rifles, grenades and occasionally automatic weapons, the guerrillas may have had a modicum of military training due to many of them serving in the army during the Second World War. Most of their attacks were attempts at sabotage, strikes against local communists and local party buildings or confrontations with the armed forces of the regime⁵⁶. Ultimately, their fate was sealed by a combination of intelligence work from the authorities, involving the creation of an informative network in the area, the use of torture and intimidation, infiltrators, “counter-gangs” with surgical operations when the groups’ location was discovered⁵⁷. Disillusionment and discouragement coupled with betrayal also accounted to the capture of some of the rebels, some going down fighting, some taking their own lives while many others ending before a firing squad or spending long years in labour camps and prisons⁵⁸.

The lessons learned in the early years of fighting the guerrillas, 1945-1948 led the Romanian communists to the belief that preventive action was needed whenever a certain segment of the population might be inclined to revolt or support partisan activity. Mass internal deportation was to play a prominent part from now on in dealing with dangerous communities.

⁵⁴ Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania 1944-1962*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 132.

⁵⁵ According to a 1951 Securitate document, of 804 captured partisans 88 were former members of the National Peasant Party, 79 of the Ploughmen Front (surprisingly, the head of this formation was prime-minister Dr. Petru Groza), 15 former members of the National Liberal Party and – most surprisingly – 42 former members of the Romanian Communist Party, see Dennis Deletant, *Teroarea comunistă în România. Gheorghiu-Dej și statul polițienesc, 1948-1965*, Romanian transl. by Lucian Leuștean, Polirom, Iași, 2001, p. 178.

⁵⁶ Report of the General Directorate of the Securitate, October 21st 1948 in Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, “*Bande, bandiți și eroi*”. *Grupurile de rezistență și Securitatea (1948-1968)*, Ed. Enciclopedică, București, 2003, Doc. 2, pp. 46-49.

⁵⁷ Andrei Miroiu, “Military Operations in Romanian Anti-Partisan Warfare, 1944-1958”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2014, pp. 185-197; *Idem*, “Intelligence and Intelligence Operations in Romanian Anti-Partisan Warfare, 1944-1958”, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2015, pp. 459-475.

⁵⁸ Florian Banu, “Metode utilizate de Securitate pentru lichidarea grupurilor de rezistență din munți (1948-1958)”, in Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, *Mișcarea armată de rezistență anticomunistă din România, 1944-1962*, Kallusys, București, 2003, pp. 301-316; Andrei Miroiu, „Wiping out ‘The Bandits’: Romanian Counterinsurgency Strategies in the Early Communist Period”, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2010, pp. 666-691.

The most prominent of these took place in the early summer of 1951 when 40.000 people were deported in the course of one day from Banat, a region in western Romania bordering Yugoslavia to the Bărăgan, a barren region in the east of the country, close to the Danube. Some of the deportees had been forcibly moved a number of times before: Romanians from Bessarabia were moved to Banat than deported to Bărăgan. Aromanians from Greece moved to Southern Dobrogea in the 20s, to the Banat in 1940 and to the Bărăgan in the 1950s⁵⁹. The main reason for this action was the suspicion that the local communities would collude with Tito's regime in the case of conflict between Yugoslavia and the rest of the Soviet camp.

Deportations were done according to Decision 200/1951 of the Romanian government which called for the forcible movement of the population living in a 25 km belt close to the Yugoslav border. About 970 of the ethnic local Serbs had been partisans in Tito's armies during the war and had maintained close relations with their former comrades leaving in the neighbour country⁶⁰. The deportation plan was finalized by the Securitate on 14 November 1950 and identified 40,320 people as "security risks". They comprised 1.330 foreign citizens, 8.477 Romanian refugees from Soviet-occupied Bessarabia, 3.557 Macedonians, 2.344 people who collaborated with the German army in World War II, 257 Germans, 1.054 "supporters of Tito", 1.218 people with relatives abroad, 367 who had supported anti-communist guerrillas, 731 "enemies of the socialist regime", 19.034 rich peasants and innkeepers, 162 former big landlords and bourgeois and 341 convicted criminals. However, a different research suggests that 9.413 of the deportees were ethnic Germans. Of them, 629 died in the Bărăgan.

Over 10.000 Army and Militia troops took part in the deportations and in addition to the trains 6.211 trucks were also used. As even this huge mobilization was insufficient, some families waited under the open sky for two or three days to be deported and most of them, upon arrival, were just abandoned on an open field⁶¹. All deportations were organized by the local party committees and were conducted by officers of the Militia, who arrived at their target's homes at 1 AM⁶². The goods of the deported were immediately seized by inventory commissions, who paid for them in cash⁶³. Some of the deported found out about the imminence of their dislocation and had their luggage prepared. One person, upon being notified of his

⁵⁹ Viorel Marineasa, Valentin Sămânță, Daniel Vighi, *Deportarea în Bărăgan. Destine, documente, reportaje*, Mirton, Timișoara, 1996, p. 9.

⁶⁰ Miodrag Milin, "Încă o dată despre geneza Bărăganului", in Silviu Sarafolean (ed.), *Deportații în Bărăgan 1951-1956*, Mirton, Timișoara, 2001, p. X.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. XIII-XV.

⁶² Viorel Marineasa, Valentin Sămânță, Daniel Vighi, *Deportarea în Bărăgan...cit.*, p. 45.

⁶³ Synthesis of the Sânicolau Mare Regional Organization of the PMR in *ibidem*, pp. 72-74.

impending deportation, committed suicide. During the searches, weapons and ammunition were found at some of the richer peasants, but there were no arrests for partisan activity were made⁶⁴.

Each train used in the deportation was huge, with 60-62 carriages, largely because each carriage was carrying only one family and their goods. They were allowed to take food, furniture, horses, a cow, their own horse-drawn cart and a pig⁶⁵. In total, 66 trains with 2.622 carriages transported on 18 June 3.537 families, while another 3.276 families were still awaiting embarkation⁶⁶. Upon arrival in the barren plains of the Bărăgan, the deported were to be employed as farm-hands at state-owned farms. In order to emphasize that the move was permanent, the authorities forced them to create new communities and to build new houses. By necessity, these houses were initially just hovels, which quickly became unsuited for living in the local climate, characterized by very little water in dry season but extreme humidity once rains began⁶⁷.

The Securitate admitted in its internal documents that the action of the local party leadership as the deportees reached the Bărăgan was extremely disorganized and unable to cope with the necessities of those relocated. The deportees had to pay for their food and the construction material for their new homes. Therefore, a big difference was noted between the poor and the rich among them, the latter having the resources to pay for what they needed⁶⁸. Building a house was compulsory; those who refused or were slow in doing so were prevented from getting jobs at local farms, seriously hurting the possibility of feeding their families. In a sign that the action was disorganized, some of the deported were allowed to build their new houses wherever they pleased, as the area was extremely large and sparsely populated. In the new localities, those arrived from Banat had the opportunity to meet others who were enduring the same fate; some of the engineers responsible for the building of the villages were also deported from other cities⁶⁹. Others were families of the partisans, who had been deported from their regions to put psychological pressure on the guerrillas and to remove one of their sources of

⁶⁴ Report of the Timișoara Committee of the PMR, 2 July 1951 in *ibidem*, pp. 78-80.

⁶⁵ Testimonies of Ana Babeți and Gina Sterian in Smaranda Vultur, *Istorie trăită – istorie povestită. Deportarea în Bărăgan (1951-1956)*, Amarcord, Timișoara, 1997, pp. 146-147, 192.

⁶⁶ Special bulletin of the Timișoara Regional Securitate, 20 June 1951 in Viorel Marineasa, Valentin Sămânță, Daniel Vighi, *Deportarea în Bărăgan...cit.*, pp. 81-84.

⁶⁷ Interview with Valeria Munteanu in Smaranda Vultur, *Istorie trăită...cit.*, pp. 210-211.

⁶⁸ Synthesis of the Securitate, 9 August 1951 in Viorel Marineasa, Valentin Sămânță, Daniel Vighi, *Deportarea în Bărăgan...cit.*, pp. 87-97.

⁶⁹ Interview with Gligor Talianu in Smaranda Vultur, *Istorie trăită...cit.*, pp. 242-245.

support⁷⁰.

Many perished in the harsh winters of the Bărăgan because of hunger, cold, desperation and low-quality medical care. The villages built by the deportees – and left by most of them after the amnesty of 1956 were demolished by the authorities in 1964, in an effort to efface the memory of a period of repression⁷¹.

Conclusion

This article has charted deportations during post-war counterinsurgencies in Malaya, Algeria and Romania. To a large degree, the findings point out that in each of these cases the governmental authorities perceived that internal dislocation of populations through massive forced resettlement were key aspects in fighting a successful COIN. In Malaya and Algeria the figures for those deported were staggering, reaching between 15 and 40% of the entire population of the two colonies. Whereas in Malaya the British and their ethnic Malay allies targeted specifically the Chinese minority, especially the poor, rural elements, as well as some of the Aborigines, in Algeria the French authorities targeted indiscriminately the Muslim population which was in any way liable of escaping strict government control. In Romania deportations either targeted specific regions that were deemed untrustworthy and possibly rebellious, or were specifically directed at the families of the armed rebels in order to punish them and force them to surrender. In all cases dislocations were brutal, with the families deported being given hours or at most days to gather a few belongings before being marched or transported to the resettlement areas. In Malaya and Algeria the villages were destroyed by governmental troops and little or no compensation was paid to those deported. In Romania the government confiscated houses and property and paid a meagre sum to the deported, but generally allowed them to take more property with them.

The reality of the new settlements varied between forced labour concentration camps in Malaya to closely supervised and guarded villages in Algeria to fairly scattered, isolated makeshift settlements in the middle of a large and inhospitable plain in Romania. The deported faced in most cases terrible

⁷⁰ See for some of these deportations, involving between two and three members of the families of the identified rebels Order of the “Gangs” Sector I Teregoa, 7 December 1951 in Nicolae Chipurici, Tudor Răţoi (eds.), *Rezistenţa anticomunistă din sud-vestul României. Opresiune şi rezistenţă. Documente*, vol. I, MJM, Craiova, 2004, Doc. 295, pp. 345-346.

⁷¹ Smaranda Vultur, *Istorie trăită...cit.*, p. 7.

conditions in the initial stages, with food shortages (or food controls in Malaya), almost no building materials, privacy-erasing conditions and extremely poor conditions. Forced resettlement meant in all cases the destruction, sometimes complete and definitive of the previous way of life, with incalculable psychological and economic consequences. This led to a vast number, perhaps never to be fully known, of people dead of hunger, disease, deprivations or depression. Interrogations sometimes including torture, control movement, creation of spy networks in the new settlements, the obligation to be identified, catalogued and to produce identification papers were also forced on the deported. In the most extreme cases, some of the deported were summarily executed when they disobeyed the authorities or were suspected of helping the rebels.

This discussion has highlighted the fact that there were precious few differences between the approaches concerning deportations of the professed democracies of Western Europe and a “proletarian dictatorship” modelled after the Stalinist Soviet Union. Even more poignantly, most of these differences were not in the favour of Britain or France. The deportations amounted in all three cases to a war fought by the government against its citizens, the very source of its authority. These particular lessons were, thankfully, ignored by the practitioners of COIN in the wars fought by US-led coalitions in Afghanistan (2001-2014) and Iraq (2003-2011), as they were technically impossible with the limited military means available, in addition to being morally reprehensible and illegal. However, incomplete accounts of campaigns in Malaya and Algeria, failing to account for the role of brutality and specifically of internal deportations in those conflicts, still dominate contemporary COIN discussions and military manuals. Current policymakers should be aware of the centrality of population control in winning post-war counterinsurgencies and weigh the merits of pursuing such a strategy.